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— *Worth* magazine

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March 23, 2012

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sen. Cornyn:

I am writing to express RAINN's strong support for the Justice for Victims Amendment, which will strengthen the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and have a tremendously positive impact on how our nation's criminal justice system responds to — and prevents — sexual violence.

One out of every six women and one in 33 men are victims of sexual assault – 20 million Americans in all, according to the Department of Justice. Rapists tend to be serial criminals, often committing many crimes before they are finally caught; and only about 3% of rapists will ever spend a single day in prison.

First, this amendment will help eliminate the DNA evidence backlog by ensuring that 75% of DNA spending goes directly to solve cases, a big improvement over current practice. It will also establish the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Registry, which will bring transparency, efficiency and accountability to the DNA backlog problem and allow policymakers to closely track local backlogs and prioritize testing. The amendment will also ensure that criminals convicted of severe crimes of violence against women receive a just punishment, and ensure that fugitive sex offenders are swiftly identified and located. If enacted, these provisions will lead to more successful prosecutions, more violent criminals behind bars, and safer communities.

RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotlines (800.656.HOPE and rainn.org), which have helped more than 1.6 million people since 1994. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual assault, help victims, and ensure that rapists are brought to justice. For more information about RAINN, please visit www.rainn.org.

Thank you for introducing the Justice for Victims Amendment. We believe this amendment will greatly enhance VAWA and result in a stronger, more effective bill. We are grateful for your unflagging leadership in the battle to prevent sexual violence and prosecute its perpetrators, and we look forward to working with you to encourage passage of this important amendment and to reauthorize VAWA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Berkowitz", written in a cursive style.

Scott Berkowitz
President and Founder